में विस्तार काउंटर खोलना, जिनके क्षेत्रीय ग्रामीण बैंक मुख्य बैंकर हैं। इसके अलावा जनवरी 1995 में भारतीय रिजर्व बैंक ने क्षेत्रीय ग्रामीण बैंकों को अपनी गैर एस एल आर अधिशेष निधियों का निर्दिष्ट लाभप्रद अवसरों और ऋण के विस्तार के लिए निवेश करने की अनुमति प्रदान की है। वर्ष 1994-95 के दौरान व्यापक पुनर्गठन के लिए 49 क्षेत्रीय ग्रामीण बैंकों की पहचान की गई है। इन 49 क्षेत्रीय ग्रामीण बैंकों से प्राप्त अनुभव बाद के वर्षों में अन्य क्षेत्रीय ग्रामीण बैंकों के लिए मार्गदर्शन प्रदान करेगा।

Uniform Policy on Tariffs

2237. SHRI SUNDER SINGH BHANDARI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) what steps have been taken on the recommendations of Chief Secretaries of Northern States for having a uniform policy on tariffs;

(b) what progress has been made in providing strong infrastructure to industries; and

(c) whether the question of uniformity in power tariff has been sorted out?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M.V. CHANDRASHEKHAR MURTHY): (a) to (c) Agreements reached about uniformity in tax rates, rationalisation of incentives and development of infrastructure in the meeting of Chief Secretaries of Northern States held on May 6, 1994 were discussed in a conference of heads of Governments of Northern States on January 11, 1995. In the conference there was broad consensus on uniform rates of sales taxes, uniform policy in the matter of fiscal/monetary incentives to industry, development of infrastructure and uniformity in power tariffs. Following the consensus reached in this conference the matter was further discussed in a meeting of Chief Secretaries of Northern States held on 24th January, 1995. The meeting recommended adoption of four slabs of sales tax rates and discontinuance of the policy of giving incentives beyond 1996-97. In the meeting it was decided to constitute a committee comprising of Secretaries, Power and Chairman, State Electricity Boards to work out modalities for achieving uniform power tariffs.

Fall of Indian Rupee against European Currency

2238. SHRI SUNDER SINGH BHANDARI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) what has been the fall of the Indian rupee against European currencies during the last six months;

(b) what have been the reasons for a persisting high rate of inflation; and

(c) in what manner Government propose to bridge the gap in our foreign trade?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M.V. CHANDRASHEKHAR MURTHY): (a) Monthwise movements of the rupee vis-a- vis major European currencies over the last six months i.e. September, 1994 to March 16, 1995 is given in the Table-1 as a statement (*see* below).

(b) Broadly the reasons for the latest rise in prices are ascribed to the following factors:

(i) high growth of monetary variable, mainly because of strong build up of foreign exchange reserves;

(ii) production shortfalls in 1993-94 in sugar, cotton, jute and groundnut causing short term supply imbalances leading to sharp rise in their prices;

(iii) spill-over effect of administered price increases in wheat, rice, sugar and energy imputs in later months of 1993-94;

(iv) cumulative impact of large increases in minimum support prices continuously for the past three years has resulted in higher primary product prices and produced upward pressure on the wage goods.